

ened our economy, defended our Nation, and reaffirmed our deepest values. All of us who are heirs to their service and sacrifice owe them a profound debt of gratitude.

The theme of this year's observance, "Caregiving: Compassion in Action," reminds us of one of the most important ways in which we can repay that debt. Each day across America, some 22 million caregivers and volunteers dedicate themselves to improving the quality of life for older family members, friends, and neighbors. By providing personal care, housekeeping, transportation, and innumerable other services and assistance, these caregivers enable many older Americans to remain in their own homes and communities, maintaining a precious measure of dignity and independence.

As America's population of older Americans continues to grow in number, we will have an even greater need to call on the skills and compassion of caregivers. In keeping with the spirit of service that is sweeping across our Nation today, I ask that all Americans—every day, but especially during Older Americans Month—reach out to an older person in need, sharing time, talents, and attention with someone who has already shared so much with us. By putting our compassion in action to serve our older citizens, we can build a more promising future for all our people.

Older Americans deserve our respect and support for they have worked diligently in so many ways to enrich and preserve the way of life we all enjoy. Our senior citizens have woven the fabric of our Nation to exemplify the values and beliefs that have made our country great.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 1997 as Older Americans Month. I call upon Government officials, businesses, communities, volunteers, educators, and all the people of the United States to honor our older Americans and acknowledge the important contributions made by their caregivers, this month and throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6997 of May 1, 1997

Loyalty Day, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Each year, Americans dedicate the first day of May to formally acknowledge our love for this great land and our loyalty to the principles of freedom and equality on which our Nation was founded. This love and loyalty cannot be mandated or legislated; rather, these traits spring freely from our hearts and minds.

Looking back across the centuries, we recognize that each generation of Americans has been called upon to express its love and loyalty in a unique way. Our founders, defying the forces of tyranny, solemnly pledged their lives and futures to defend the new Nation they had created, a Nation born of reverence for human rights and the principle of self-determination. Less than a century later, another generation of Americans spilled its blood to preserve the unity of our Nation and to ensure that America lived up to its ideals of freedom, justice, and equality.

The challenges of our own century have called for an extraordinary measure of devotion from millions of our citizens. Through two devastating world wars and the decades of the Cold War, Americans laid down their lives for love of country and to defend democracy, advance human rights, and oppose the specter of oppression.

Today we are blessed to be living in a time of unprecedented peace and possibility, when the ideals of democracy and human dignity so eloquently articulated by our founders have been widely embraced by nations in our own hemisphere and around the world. But we have fresh opportunities to prove our love and loyalty to America. The challenge for our generation is to realize the promise of our Nation: to be a strong and steady influence for peace and freedom across the globe; to be a powerful voice for human rights wherever they are silenced; to live up to America's promise of justice, equality, and opportunity by ensuring that all of our people have the tools and encouragement they need to meet their God-given potential.

The Congress, by Public Law 85-529, has designated May 1 of each year as "Loyalty Day." Let us, on this day, remember the contributions of the many courageous Americans who have gone before us, and let us keep faith with them by reaffirming our love for and loyalty to this Nation they sustained with their service and sacrifice.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1, 1997, as Loyalty Day. I urge all Americans to recall, on this day, the valor and selflessness of all those who made this Nation so worthy of our love and loyalty. I call upon Government officials to display the flag of the United States and to participate in patriotic activities in support of this national observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON